

# The Million Dollar Mystery

By HAROLD MAC GRATH

Illustrated from Scenes in the Photo Drama of the Same Name by the Thanhouser Film Company

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## CHAPTER VI.

"Did you get the range?" asked the countess, when late that night Elaine recounted his adventure.

"Range?" she snarled. "My girl, haven't I just told you that I had to fight for my life? My boat was in flames. We had to swim for it till we were picked up by a long island barge tug. I don't know what became of the motorman. He must have headed straight for shore. And I'm glad he did. Otherwise he'd be howling for the price of another boat. Olga, for the first time I've had to let one of the boys have a look at my face. Doesn't know the name; but one of these days he'll stumble across it, and the result will be black mail, unless I push him off into the dark. It was accidental."

"The countess leaned forward, her hands tightly clinched.

"But the boy?"

"Elaine made a gesture of despair. "Leo, are you using any drug these days?"

"Don't make fun of me, Olga," impetuously. "Did you ever see me drink more than a pint of wine or smoke more than two cigars in an evening? Poor fools! What! let my brain go into the wastebasket for the sake of an hour or so of exhilaration? No, and never will! I'm keen about the gray matter I've got, and by the Lord Harry, I'm going to keep it. There's only one dope fiend in the Hundred, and he's one of the best doctors we have; so we let him have his coke whenever he really needs it. But this man Felton has seen my face. Some day he'll see it again, ask questions, and then—"

"Then what?"

"A burial at sea," he laughed. The laughter died swiftly as it came. "Throw it into eight hundred feet of water, on a bar where the sands are always shifting. He'll never find it, even if he took the range. He could not have got a decent one. The sun was dropping and the shadows were long. He threw the chest into the water and then began peering away at us, cool as you please, and fired our tank."

"It looks to me as if he had wasted his time."

"That depends. Between you and me and the gate-post, I've a sneaking idea that this man Jones, whom nobody has given any particular attention to, is a deep, clever man. He may have been honestly attempting to find a new hiding place; the advertisement in the newspaper may have drawn him. He may have thrown the box over in pure rage at seeing himself checked. Again, the whole thing may have been worked up for our benefit. A blind. But if that's the case, Jones has us on the hip, for we can't tell. But we can do what in all probability he expects we'll cease to do—watch him just as shrewdly as before."

Olga caught his hand and drew him down beside her. "I wasn't going to bother you tonight, but it may mean something vital."

"What?"

"For reply she rose and walked over to the light button. She pressed it and the apartment became dark.

"Come over to the window, quick!" She dragged him across the room.

"Over the way, the house with the marble frontage."

A man emerged, lit a cigarette, and walked leisurely down the street.

"No!" she cried, as Elaine turned to make for the door doubtless with the intention of finding out who this man was. "Every night after you leave he appears."

"Does he follow me?"

"No. And that's what bothered me at first. I believed he was watching some apartment above. But regularly when I turn out the lights he comes forth. So there's no doubt that he watches you enter and takes note of your departure."

"But doesn't follow me. That's odd. What the devil is his idea?"

talk of wrinkles.

"They are more important than you think. Every morning I rub out the wrinkle I go to bed with."

"I wish you could rub out the general stupidity which is wrinkling my brain. I've made three moves and failed in each. What's come over me?"

"Perhaps you've had too many successes. The wheel of chance is always turning around."

"May I smoke?"

"Thanks. At least it proves you still have some consideration for me. You would smoke whether it was agreeable or not. But I like the odor of a good cigar. And it always helps you to think."

Elaine lit the cigar and began his customary pacing. At length he paused.

"Suppose we have a real old-fashioned coaching party out to the old mansion we know about?"

"And what shall we do there?"

"Make the mansion an enchanted castle where sometimes people who enter can't get out. Do you think you could get her to go?"

"I can try."

"Olga, I must have that girl, and I must have her soon. Sometimes I find myself, mightily puzzled over the whole thing. If Hargrave is alive, why doesn't he turn up now that it's practically known that his daughter presides over his household? I might understand it if I didn't know that Hargrave is really afraid of nothing. Where in the man with the five thousand, picked up at sea? What was the reason for Jones carrying that box out in broad daylight? Who is the chap watching across the street? Sometimes I believe in my soul—if I have one—that Hargrave is playing with us, playing! Well, flinging the half hummed clear into the grate—the black hummed always goes for ward, win or lose, and never forgets."

"We are a fine pair!" said the woman bitterly.

"We are exactly what fate intended us to be. They wrote you down in the book as a beautiful body with a crooked mind. They wrote me down as the devil, doomed to roam earth's top till I'm killed."

"Killed?"

"Why, yes. I'm not the kind of chap who dies in bed, surrounded by the weeping members of the family, doctor, nurse, and priest. I'm a scoundrel, but it has this saving grace, I enjoy being a scoundrel. Now I'm going up to the club. There's nothing like a game of billiards or chess to smooth that wrinkle which seems to worry you."

In the great newspaper office there was a mighty racket. Midnight air ways means pandemonium in the city room of a metropolitan daily. Copy boys were rushing to and fro, messengers and printers with sticky galley in their hands; reporters were banging away at their typewriters and intermingling you could hear the ceaseless clackety-click from the telegraph room.

The managing editor came out of his office and approached the desk of the night city editor.

"Editorial page gone down?"

"Twenty minutes ago," said the night city editor.

"I wanted a story on that Panama rumper."

"Too late."

"Where's Jim Norton?"

"At the chamber of commerce banquet. The mayor is going to throw a bomb into the enemy's camp."

"Nothing on the Hargrave stuff?"

"No. Guess I'd better put that in the cubbyhole. He's dead."

"No will found yet?"

"Not a piece as big as a postage stamp."

"That will leave the girl in a tough place. No will, no birth certificate, and, worst of all, no photograph of the old man himself. I don't see why Jim sidestepped this affair. He has only man in town who knew anything about Hargrave."

"He hasn't given it up; but he wants to cover it on his own, turn the yarn over when he's got it, no false alarm."

"Ah! So that's the game?"

"Yes; and Jim is the sort every paper needs. When the time comes the story turns up, if there is one. Here he is now. Looks like an actor in the fourth act of a drama. Good-looking chap, though."

Norton came in through the outer gates. He was in evening clothes, top hat. A dead cigarette dangled between his lips.

"How much do you want?" asked the night city editor.

"Column and a half."

"Off with your good rags!"

"Anything good?" asked the managing editor.

"The lid has been jammed on tight. No wine in any restaurant after one o'clock. There'll be a roundup of every gunman in town."

"Good work! Go to it."

It was one o'clock when Norton turned in his last sheet of copy and started for home. Just outside the entrance to the building a man with a slouch hat drawn down over his eyes stooped forward.

"Mr. Norton?"

"Yes," Norton stopped back suspiciously.

The other chuckled, raised and lowered his hat swiftly.

"Good Lord!" murmured the reporter.

"Will you take a ride with me in a taxi?"

"All the way to Syracuse, if you say so. Well, I'll be tinker d—d!"

"No names, please!"

What took place in that taxicab was never generally known. But at ten o'clock the next morning Norton surprised the elevator boy by going out. Norton proceeded downtown to the national bank, where he deposited \$5,000 in bills of large denominations. The teller had some difficulty in counting them. They stuck together and retained the sodden appearance of money recently submerged in water.

Florence was delighted at the idea of a coaching party. Often during her schoolgirl days she had seen the fashionable coaches go careening along the road, with the sharp, clear note of the hagle rising above the thunder of hoofs and rattling of wheels. Jones was not enthusiastic; neither was he a killjoy.

"But you are to go along, too," said Florence.

"I, Miss Florence?"

"The countess invited you especially. You will go with a hamper."

"Ah, in my capacity as butler; very good, Miss Florence. To her he gave no sign of his secret satisfaction.

The hour arrived, and the gay party bowed away. They wound in and out of the streets toward the country to the crack of the whip and the blast of the horn. Florence's enjoyment would have been perfect had it not been for the absence of Norton. Why hadn't he been invited? She did not ask because she did not care to disclose to the countess her interest in the reporter. They were nearing the limits of the city, when the coach was forced to take a sharp turn to avoid an automobile in trouble. The man pattering at the engine raised his head. It was Norton, and Florence waved her hand vigorously.

"A coaching party," he murmured; "and your Charlie Jones was not invited. Oh, very well!" He laughed, and suddenly grew serious. It would not hurt to find out where that coach was going.

He set to work savagely, located the trouble, righted it, and set off for the Hargrave home. He found Susan and bombarded her with questions which to Susan came with the rapidity of rain upon the roof.

"So Jones went along?"

"In his capacity of butler only."

Norton smiled. "Well, I'll take a hunt out there myself. You are sure of the location?"

"Yes."

"Well, good by. I'll go as a waiter, since they wouldn't invite me. I'm one of the best little waiters you ever heard of; and all things come to him who waits."

What a pleasant affable young man he was! thought Susan as she watched him jump into the car and go flying up the street.

Jones was a good deal surprised when Norton turned up at the old Chilton manor.

"What made you come here dressed like this?" the butler demanded.

"I'm a suspicious duffer; maybe that's the reason."

"Do you know anything?"

"Well, no; I can't say that I do. But, hang it, I just had to come out here."

"Maybe it's just as well you did," said Jones moodily.

"I know this place. The housekeeper used to be my nurse, and if she is still on the job she may be of service to us. You don't think they'll question or recognize me?"

"Hardly. I'll put in a word for you. I'll say I sent for you, not knowing if we had enough servants to take care of the luncheon."

"And now I'll go and hunt up Meg," said Jones moodily.

"I know this place. The housekeeper used to be my nurse, and if she is still on the job she may be of service to us. You don't think they'll question or recognize me?"

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Norton inspected the rooms carefully, stowing away in his mind every detail. He might be worrying about nothing; but so many strange things had happened that it was better to be on the side of caution than on the side of carelessness. He left the house and ran across Jones carrying a basket of wine.

"Here, Norton; take this to the party. I want to reconnoiter."

"All right, m'lord! Say, Jones, how much do you think I'd earn at this job?" comically.

"Get along with you, Mr. Norton. It may be the time to laugh, and then it may not."

"I'm going back into the house and hide behind a secret panel. I've got my revolver. You go to the stables and take a try at my car; see if she works smoothly. We may have to do some hiking. Where is the countess in this?"

"Leave that to me, Mr. Norton," said the butler with his grim smile. "He off; they are moving back toward the house."

So Norton carried the basket around to the lawn, where it was taken from his hands by the regular servant. He sighed as he saw Florence, laughing and chatting with a man who was a stranger and whom he heard of as a countess's friend. Some friend of the countess, no doubt. Where was all this tangle going to end? He wished he knew. And what a yarn he was going to write some day! It would be read like one of Gaboriau's tales.

The hour arrived, and the gay party bowed away. They wound in and out of the streets toward the country to the crack of the whip and the blast of the horn. Florence's enjoyment would have been perfect had it not been for the absence of Norton. Why hadn't he been invited? She did not ask because she did not care to disclose to the countess her interest in the reporter. They were nearing the limits of the city, when the coach was forced to take a sharp turn to avoid an automobile in trouble. The man pattering at the engine raised his head. It was Norton, and Florence waved her hand vigorously.

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gradually designated their numbers without getting anywhere toward the goal.

Jones shouted that the limousine was tearing down the road. Something must be done to stop it. He suggested that he drop behind, leave his horse, and take a chance at putting a fire from the shrubbery at the roadside.

"Keep going. Don't stop, Norton, till you are back in town. I'll manage to take good care of myself."

(Continued Tomorrow Afternoon.)

## The Churches.

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran, Corner Silver and Sixth. Edward P. Schuler, D. D., pastor. Services at 11 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. with preaching of the Word. Morning theme, "What Makes a Church Strong?"

We sang at the "Men Wanted" sign for the evening service at 7:30, when the Endeavor meeting will be combined with the preaching service with Martin Johnson in charge of the topic, "The Christian and the World."

On Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock a mass meeting of all young people's societies will be held in this church. The local secretary, Paul C. Brown, of California.

Our Bible training class on Wednesday evening.

Our Endeavorers will have a Halloween social Friday night at Miss Jessie Berger's home, 917 North Fourth street. All welcome. No charge.

The Sunday school is busy with a program for Luther's birthday, Sunday, November 8, in the evening. Regular session at 2:45 a. m. in charge of Superintendent F. C. Koelker.

ImmEDIATE CONCEPTION, Sunday, June 7, 20 and 21, 8:30. Lots more, 10.

Christian Science, Christian Science services are held in the women's club building at the corner of Seventh street and Third avenue, every Sunday morning at 11 o'clock.

Wednesday evening services are at 8 o'clock.

The public is cordially invited to attend these services.

Sunday school at 9:45 o'clock.

Reading room in the N. T. Arnold building, room No. 18, open each week day from 2 to 5 p. m.

St. John's Episcopal, Corner of Fourth street and West Silver avenue. Rev. William K. Warren, D. D., rector; residence, 1309 West Third avenue.

Ten o'clock Sunday after Trinity.

Holy Eucharist at 8 a. m. Sunday morning, 11 a. m. Morning prayer and sermon, 11 a. m. subject, "The Sacrament of Penance."

Evening prayer and sermon, 7:30 p. m. subject, "Atonement and Purposes of Missionary Training."

Morning music.

Practical, "My God, permit me to be a stranger to myself."

And then, "I am a stranger to myself."

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Brooklyn Christian, Corner of Gold avenue and Broadway.

All the members who are interested in our new building are especially urged to be present Sunday morning. The building committee has the plans well under way. At this hour they intend to give the members the opportunity to lend their support to their interest, their presence and in their financial support.

Morning worship at 11 o'clock. Preaching by Brother Ferguson on the subject, "David and Goliath."

Bible school at 9:45 a. m. Lesson, Acts, fourth chapter.

Christian Endeavor at 8:15 p. m. subject, "The Christian and the World." Luke 12:41-48.